

seized on the representation of women warriors as a way to fantasize about the possibilities of female agency. Eagerly reading press reports of the revolution in France and chafing at their inability to participate, these writers, as Koser convincingly demonstrates, saw armed female militants as an opportunity to imagine alternatives for their own lives.

In thinking about ways in which the line of inquiry represented in Koser's monograph might be extended, I found myself wondering if it might have been productive to contextualize these armed women warriors more broadly in German culture. There is a brief section in the book (6–10) that covers German theories of comparative anatomy and gender difference in the period. One might go on, however, to think about them more deeply in the context of shifting understandings of women's role in the household, of the emphasis placed on breastfeeding, and of the more profound role that mothers were understood to play in the socialization of children (see Friedrich Kittler's *Aufschreibesysteme*). What does it say that these warrior figures emerged at precisely the same historical moment that the nuclear family and mothers' role in the bourgeois household were articulated, celebrated, and limited as never before? One might also think about the broader history of women's sexuality and the way that feminine virtue, and especially chastity, was thematized in works of the period. Such arguments have turned out to be central for debates about aesthetics (see Christopher Wild's *Theater der Keuschheit—Keuschheit des Theaters*).

And it would be worth thinking more about the historical specificity of these female figures around 1800. How are these representations of women warriors, at the turn of the nineteenth century, different from what came before and after? Koser seems to suggest at points that these women warriors around 1800 were almost without precedent: "Violent women, with the exception perhaps of Euripides's *Bacchae* or the iconic figures Judith and Salome, were rarely portrayed wielding their own weapons to inflict the fatal blow until the final decades of the eighteenth century" (5). But as Koser herself notes, German authors of this period consistently cited biblical (Judith, Yael), medieval (Joan of Arc), and ancient examples (the Amazons) to think about (and through) women warriors of this period. It would be interesting to think more about the shifting function of these armed women and the ways depictions of women warriors at the turn of the nineteenth century connect to earlier traditions of martyrdom.

Clayton Whisnant. *Queer Identities and Politics in Germany: A History, 1880–1945*.

Harrington Park Press, 2016. 348 pp. US\$40 (Paperback).  
ISBN 978-1-939594-09-9.

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Clayton Whisnant's survey successfully fills a long-recognized need in the literature on sexualities in Germany for a broad overview of the emergence

of homosexual identity that is accessible to the general reader. Closing a forty-year gap since the publication of James Steakley's *The Homosexual Emancipation Movement in Germany*, Whisnant effectively synthesizes the rich material historians have been producing since the 1990s. As the title suggests, he has chosen to concentrate on the more publicly visible aspects of homosexuality. *Identity*, as Whisnant uses it, means articulation of concepts of the sexual self that became visible in literary, theoretical, or promotional contexts. In keeping with his stated goal of avoiding academic argumentation and theoretical analysis, this is not a history of subjectivities, the complexities of desire, the nature of relationships, or the fine grain of everyday life (5). The text integrates primary-source quotations frequently and skilfully, allowing readers to gain insights into the culture of bars and organizations, as well as the conceptualizations and representations deployed by a variety of writers. Most prominently, the book is a story of a struggle over how to define and manage a new type of individual.

The role of scientific literature in explaining same-sex and gender-nonconforming behaviour takes centre stage for much of the book. The reason for its prominence is not only science's importance in identity formation and political advocacy but also the book's culmination in the Nazi persecutions. Here, in spite of his preference for narrative over analysis, Whisnant concludes with a detailed consideration of why as well as exactly how persecution of homosexual men fit into Nazi eugenic and racial construction of the *Volksgemeinschaft*.

Whisnant does not completely exclude historiography and conceptual debates, instead placing these in explanatory sections of the text, guiding readers new to this material through the various ways scholars have interpreted the legacy of Magnus Hirschfeld, for example, or the notion of Weimar decadence (38–39, 200). Each of the six chapters includes generous reference to scholars' more focused studies. The first two chapters fill in the emergence of a medicalized concept of homosexuality and the scandals that helped to spread the notion more broadly in the pre-First World War German-speaking world. Three chapters are devoted primarily to the Weimar era—one on the emergence of what Whisnant terms "scenes" in bars, cabaret, and organizations; one on cultural representation, from Thomas Mann to the film *Mädchen in Uniform* to the photography of Wilhelm von Gloeden to popular newsletters; and one on the politics of the repeal of the notorious Paragraph 175 of the Criminal Code, which laid out the punishments for male-male sexual contact. In addition to the final chapter on the Nazi era, Whisnant adds a brief epilogue following up on his themes for the postwar period.

The book is especially strong in its even-handed discussion of the variety of identities produced by the category of homosexuality and the resulting fracturing of organizing and politics. Going back to Steakley, historians have recognized the contentious split between men, like Hirschfeld, who explained homosexuality as a biological phenomenon and those who were drawn to a more cultural, sometimes termed "masculinist," direction, loosely grouped

around Adolf Brand. Whisnant breaks up this duality, discussing the splits and tensions within each group, as well as figures who did not fit into either camp. He includes social clubs and their publications, seldom analyzed thoroughly in English-language histories, as a key element for the creation of a queer community that was socially broader, yet also obsessed with maintaining a respectable public image of homosexuality. Whisnant also traces the fracturing that occurred within the campaign to repeal Paragraph 175. Making this painful history visible is important for Whisnant's purpose of giving contemporary queer readers a fuller sense of community formation and political struggle in the past (9, 254).

Some readers will have noticed a discrepancy between the *queer* of the title and the *homosexual* used in most of this review. Whisnant does discuss contentions over terminology, usually using *homosexual* or *gay* and *lesbian* in his own text (11–12). If the term *queer* denotes a broad consideration of non-heteronormative phenomena or a queering of our take on the past, Whisnant's book does not match his title. It is much more a standard LGBT history with typical emphasis on the *G*. Nevertheless, Whisnant has made a determined effort to include women in the scope of his book. Two of his featured individuals are Johanna Elberskirchen, a feminist sex and gender critic of the 1900s, and Claire Waldoff, the popular cabaret performer. Women were more visible in the club and print scenes of the Weimar era, and here Whisnant's descriptions are roughly parallel. But his choice of public focus makes it inevitable that women will always be added on to what is essentially a story about men, with three of the six chapters hardly mentioning women at all. Trans and drag history is touched on very lightly, despite the choice of the famous drag act the Rocky Twins for the cover. No doubt because of the strong theoretical bent of gender analysis, the book contains little discussion of gender, although occasionally masculinity and effeminacy come up as the concepts appear in the scientific or organization sources. In this story of men in public, Whisnant's frank inclusion of cruising and prostitution as key sites of queer contact for men contributes to putting sex back into the history of sexuality. A stronger discussion of the tensions and denials this produced might have been more revealing of identity and politics than some of the book's more abstract scientific discussions.

A book aimed mainly at American students and general readers would have benefited from better historical context in the Weimar section. Attempts at brevity sometimes result in misleading or confusing statements, especially concerning the Constitution and electoral politics. At one point the text uses DNVP (Deutschnationale Volkspartei) where the DVP (Deutsche Volkspartei) is clearly meant, leaving the passage nonsensical (196). In other respects, the book is reader- and student-friendly, using English translations for all titles and group names, and providing an extensive apparatus of chapter overviews, terms, notes, index, and bibliography. *Queer Identities and Politics in Germany* should be the first book non-specialists reach for as a broad introduction to the crucial history of homosexualities in modern Germany.